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Remarks

This Amendment and Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action mailed March 15, 2006. Claims 1-32, 34-41 and 43-45 were rejected. Reexamination and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim 1, 35 and 37 have been amended to recite a coil spring compressively interposed between a retainer and a biasing member; the outer handle having an outer surface adapted to be gripped by a user; and the interface member in direct contact with the inner surface of the outer handle.

Claim 11 has been canceled. Claim 32 has been amended to delete reference to polymeric materials. Claims 37 and 41 have been amended to add the necessary antecedent.

Claims 1, 3-13, 15, 16, 22-24, 26-29, 31, 34-41 and 43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,272,036 ("Van Hoose") in view of U.S. patent No. 6,4487,943 ("Jansson").

First, Van Hoose teaches rollers 90 and rollers 88 or ball bearings 88a, 90a located between the bearing pin 92 (interface member) and the inner surface of the wall 30 (outer handle) resulting in two discrete sets of intermediate force transferring structures that must be maintained in alignment and operate in unison to perform the torque limiting function. The rollers 88 and 90, the inner handle 62 and the ratchet head 26 of Van Hoose are made of metal in order to maintain that alignment.

The claimed structure recites the elongated surface on the interface members in direct contact with the inner surface of the outer handle. There are no intermediate structures. One or more of the inner handle, the outer handle and the interface members are made of a polymeric material.

Van Hoose apparently recognized some advantage in having two layers of intermediate roller (90 and 88) between the bearing pin 92 and the outer handle 30. No teaching or motivation has been identified in Van Hoose for surrendering this advantage. The need to maintain accurate alignment of the members 92, 90, 88, 30 provides strong support for the proposition that there is no teaching or motivation in Van Hoose to make any

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of these components out of a polymeric material. Therefore, Applicant submits that there is no motivation to modify Van Hoose as proposed or to combine Van Hoose with Jansson.

Second, as acknowledged on page 13 of the Office Action, neither of the cited references disclose the claimed coil spring compressively interposed between a retainer and a biasing member. Van Hoose uses upper and lower deflecting beams 20, 22 to generate the a biasing force. The spring force is adjusted by moving the slidable collar 112.

Applicants submit that there is no teaching or motivation in Van Hoose to substitute the claimed coil spring oriented along the longitudinal axis for the upper and lower deflecting beams 20, 22. The upper and lower deflecting beams 20, 22 of Van Hoose can generate a significantly greater biasing force than a coil spring, such as the coil spring of Bonneau. The upper and lower deflecting beams structure is compatible with the large torque a user can generate with the elongated handle 12 of Van Hoose. No motivation for surrendering this advantage has been identified in Van Hoose. Moreover, there is no teaching or disclosure in any of the cited references for a coil spring that can generate a spring force sufficient to operate with the large torques applied to the head 26 using the elongated handle 12 of Van Hoose.

Third, the configuration of Van Hoose is that of a conventional socket wrench with a low profile head and an interface for sockets. Substituting the spring assembly of Bonneau would require Van Hoose to surrender the benefits of the low profile head 26. Contrary to Van Hoose, the claimed structure includes an outer handle oriented along the longitudinal axis adapted to be gripped by a user. Again, there is no motivation in Van Hoose to surrender this advantage.

Fourth, the claimed outer handle has a longitudinally oriented outer gripping surface. Van Hoose teaches a transverse handle 12 that provides significant mechanical advantage over the claimed longitudinally oriented handle. Applicants submit that there is no motivation for Van Hoose to surrender that advantage and adopt the claimed longitudinally oriented handle.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants submit that claims 1, 35 and 37, and the claims that depend thereon, distinguish over the cited references.

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Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,272,036 ("Van Hoose") in view of U.S. patent No. 6,4487,943 ("Jansson"), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,746,298 ("Krivec"). In light of the allowability of claim 1 discussed above, Applicants submit that claim 2 distinguishes over the cited references and is in condition for allowance.

Claims 14, 25, 30 and 44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,272,036 ("Van Hoose") in view of U.S. patent No. 6,4487,943 ("Jansson"), and further in view of U.S Patent No. 6,357,538 ("Tibbitts"). In light of the allowability of claims 1 and 37 discussed above, Applicants submit that claims 14, 25, 30 and 44 distinguishes over the cited references and is in condition for allowance.

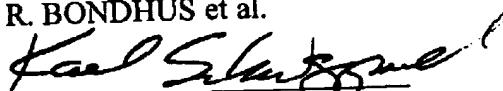
Claims 17-21 and 45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,272,036 ("Van Hoose") in view of U.S. patent No. 6,4487,943 ("Jansson"), and further in view of U.S Patent No. 2,797,564 ("Bonneau"). Claims 1 and 37 have been amended to recite a coil spring compressively interposed between a retainer and a biasing member. In light of the allowability of claims 1 and 37 discussed above, Applicants submit that claims 17-21 and 45 distinguishes over the cited references and is in condition for allowance.

No fee is believed to be necessary. Should any fee be required, the Commissioner is authorized to charge our Deposit Account No. 06-0029, and in such an event, is requested to notify us of the same.

Respectfully Submitted,

JOHN R. BONDHUS et al.

By:


Karl G. Schwappach, #35,786
FAEGRE & BENSON LLP
2200 Wells Fargo Center
90 South Seventh Street
Minneapolis, MN 55402-3901
612/766-7773

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